

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUNICH 00344 101241Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL MUNICH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6682

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL SALZBURG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: RFE ACCREDITATION TO WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

REF: MUNICH 0331 AND PREVIOUS

1. LORD KILLANIN, PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, WAS INTERVIEWED ON WEST GERMAN TV (PROGRAM I-ARD) EVENING OF FEBRUARY 9. IN COURSE OF INTERVIEW, BAVARIAN RADIO CORRESPONDENT ROLF MITTLER RAISED ISSUE OF WITHDRAWAL OF RFE ACCREDITATION, ASKING KILLANIN WHETHER HE DIDN'T RPT DIDN'T FEEL THAT "A NICE LETTER OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN ORDER." (N.B. ROLF WAS PRESUMABLY REFERRING TO IOC'S FAILURE TO REPLY, EITHER ORALLY OR IN WRITING, TO RFE ACTING DIRECTOR COOK'S FEBRUARY 5 LETTER TO KILLANIN, WHICH WAS REPORTED IN MUNICH 0316). KILLANIN REPLIED AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE:

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PAGE 02 MUNICH 00344 101241Z

THE QUESTION OF RADIO FREE EUROPE, I THINK MUST BE

MADE QUITE CLEAR, THIS DID ARISE ORGINALLY IN MUNICH WHEN THERE WAS A TRUCE. THEY ARE IN RATHER A UNIQUE POSITION IN THAT IT IS NOT FINANCED BY GERMANY -- IT IS A FOREIGN STATION BASED IN GERMANY AND THERE IS A PRINCIPLE INVOLVED. I BELIEVE OVER THE YEARS THEY HAVE DONE IT. AS I SAY WE HAVE NOT WRITTEN A LETTER BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN RATHER BUSY. BUT ONE THING I WANT TO MAKE QUITE CLEAR IS THAT WE DO NOT WANT THE OLYMPIC GAMES TO BE USED FOR PROGAGANDA, OR AS A BAIT, AS AN ATTRACTIONFOR PROPAGANDA. IN MUNICH THERE WAS A TRUCE. I THINK IF SOME DISCUSSIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE BEFORE -- THE POSITION MIGHT HAVE BEEN MUCH HAPPIER. END QUOTE.

2. WALTER K. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF RFE/RL, HAS SENT FOLLOWING TELEGRAM DATED FEBRUARY 10 TOKILLANIN: BEGIN TEXT:

RADIO FREE EUROPE MUST MOST VIGOROUSLY PROTEST THE DECISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO CANCEL ACCREDITATIONS FOR OUR TEAM WHICH IS COVERING THE WINTER OLYMPICS AND FOR YOUR STATEMENT YESTERDAY BROADCAST ON WEST GERMAN TELEVISION IN WHICH YOU ATTEMPTED TO JUSTIFY THAT DECISION. IN THAT STATEMENT YOU MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE ACCREDITATIONS WERE WITHDRAWN NOT DUE TO A TECHNICALITY WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN APPLIED TO OTHER SPORTS REPORTERS COVERING THE INNSBRUCK OLYMPICS BUT BECAUSE, AS YOU SAID, "THERE IS A PRINCIPLE INVOLVED." YOU SAID, "WE DO NOT WANT THE OLYMPIC GAMES TO BE USED FOR PROPAGANDA, OR AS A BAIT, AS AN ATTRACTION FOR PROPAGANDA. IN MUNICH THERE WAS A TRUCE. I THINK IF SOME DISCUSSIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE BEFORE, THE POSITION MIGHT HAVE BEEN MUCH HAPPIER."

RADIO FREE EUROPE APPLIED FOR ITS ACCREDITATIONS IN THE PROPER FASHION. WE WERE INFORMED BY THE AUSTRIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE THATTHE ACCREDITATIONS HAD BEEN GRANTED AND WE ACCEPTED THIS ASSURANCE IN GOOD FAITH. IF THERE HAD BEEN A DESIRE FOR DISCUSSIONS ON THE PART OF THE IOC OR OTHER OLYMPIC OFFICIALS, WE WOULD OF COURSE HAVE BEEN QUITE READY TO TALK.

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PAGE 03 MUNICH 00344 101241Z

NO SUCH SUGGESSTION WAS MADE. THE WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION WAS MADE ABRUPTLY AFTER THE GAMES WERE ALREADY UNDERWAY. NO REASONS FOR THE ACTION WERE GIVEN ANDNON OPPORTUNITY WAS PROVIDED FOR RADIO FREE EUROPE TO RESPOND. IN FACT NO REASONS FOR THE ACTION HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO US.

RADIO FREE EUROPE HAS COVERED OLYMPIC EVENTS REGULARLY FOR THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR YEARS. NEVER BEFORE HAVE OUR REQUESTS FOR ACCREDITATION OR THE NATURE OF OUR SPORTS COVERAGE, WHICH HAS BEEN COMPLETELY UNPOLITICAL, BEEN QUESTIONED. RADIO FREE EUROPE BROADCASTS INFORMATION AND IDEAS TO THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN EUROPE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF ARTICLE NINETEEN OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: "EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO SEEK, RECEIVE AND IMPART INFORMATION AND IDEAS THROUGH ANY MEDIA REGARDLESS OF FRONTIERS." IN DESCRIBING OUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN EUROPE WITH INFORMATION AND IDEAS DENIED THEM BY THEIR DOMESTIC MEDIA AS "PROPAGANDA" AND TAKING ACTION WHICH IMPEDES THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION, THE IOC HAS IN FACT MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE OLYMPICS TO BE USED FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSED BY THE STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. THIS ACTION HAS, IN FACT, NOT ONLY VIOLATED THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CITED ABOVE BUT ALSO A PRINCIPLE OF THE IOC ITSELF BY FACILITATING THE USE OF THE OLYMPICS FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. WE URGENTLY REQUEST THAT THE ACCREDITATIONS BE REINSTATED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. END TEXT.

3. RFE IS RELEASING TEXT OF SCOTT'S LETTER TO REUTERS, UPI, AFP AND OTHERS. RELEASE ALSO CONTAINS FOLLOWING EXPLANATORY PARAGRAPH:

BEGIN TEXT: FIRST WORD THAT IOC MIGHT TAKE THIS ACTION WAS REPORTED BY THE OFFICIAL SOVIET NEWS AGENCY TASS AT 1427 HRS CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, AND FOLLOWED UP BY A REPORT IN RADIO MOSCOW'S NEWSCAST OF 1700 HRS CET THAT EVENING. RADIO MOSCOW SAID THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION IN INNSBRUCK, SUPPORTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 MUNICH 00344 101241Z

BY RADIO-TV REPRESENTATIVES OF BULGARIA, HUNGARY, G.D.R., POLAND, THE USSR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAD RPOTESTED AGAINST THE ACCREDITATIO OF SPORTS REPORTERS OF RFE WHICH, RADIO MOSCOW SAID, "REPRESENTS NO ONE AND ENGAGES IN SLANDEROUS SUBVERSIVE PROPAGANDA AGAINST THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES." THE IOC, RADAQ MOSCOW WENT ON, "ANNULLED THE ACCREDITATION OF THESE POISONERS OF THE AIRWAVES, IN EFFECT KICKING THEM OUTCOF INNSBRUCK." THIS REPORT, WHICH ATTEMPTS TO PRESNT THE IOC AS SUPPORTING THE LONGSTANDING AND UTTERLY FALSE CLAIMS OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDISTS ABOUT THE "SUBVERSIVE" CHARACTER OF RFE'S BROADCASTS, WERE SUBSEQUENT- LY REPEATED BY THE MEDIA OF OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN COUN- TIRES, SOMETIMES VIRTUALLY WORD FOR WORD. END TEXT.

4. COMMITTEE KILLANIN'S STATEMENT IS CRYPTIC AND MORE

THAN A BIT DISJOINTED. IT SEEMS CLEAR, NEVERTHELESS, THAT DECISION TO WITHDRAW RFE'S CREDENTIAL SWAS MADE WITH HIS KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT IF NOT RPT NOT BY HIM PERSONALLY. THIS SUGGESTS THAT ANY EFFORTS TO PERSUADE IOC TO REVERSE ITS POSITION ON RFE ACCREDITATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD KILLANIN PERSONALLY AS WELL AS OTHER MEMBERS OF IOC. PETERSON

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